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GENERAL

1. Finland's position estimated to be stronger--US Embassy Oslo transmits the opinion of Norwegian Defense Minister Hauge that Finland's position has been greatly strengthened by the North Atlantic Pact and that the USSR is now more hesitant to take over Finland because of repercussions which would inevitably follow in the West. The Defense Minister added that a Soviet attempt to take over Finland would precipitate a crisis in Sweden; Hauge also reaffirmed his view that in the last analysis Sweden would side with the West and would certainly fight if invaded.

NEAR EAST-AFRICA

2. PALESTINE: Israel offers Jordan access to sea -- US Charge Fritzlan in Amman has been informed by the Jordan representative in the current Israeli-Jordan peace negotiations that during the 13 December meeting, the Israeli delegation offered to grant Jordan full sovereignty over a corridor to the Mediterranean. According to the Jordan representative, the Israeli offer was made subject to the following reservations: (a) there should be no military installations or bases in the corridor; (b) the Israelis should have free passage across the corridor at three places; and (c) the British treaty guaranteeing Jordan's integrity should not apply to the corridor.

(CIA Comment: CIA believes that although other difficult problems face the negotiators, this offer represents a concession on the part of Israel which may make a substantial contribution toward a settlement.)

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